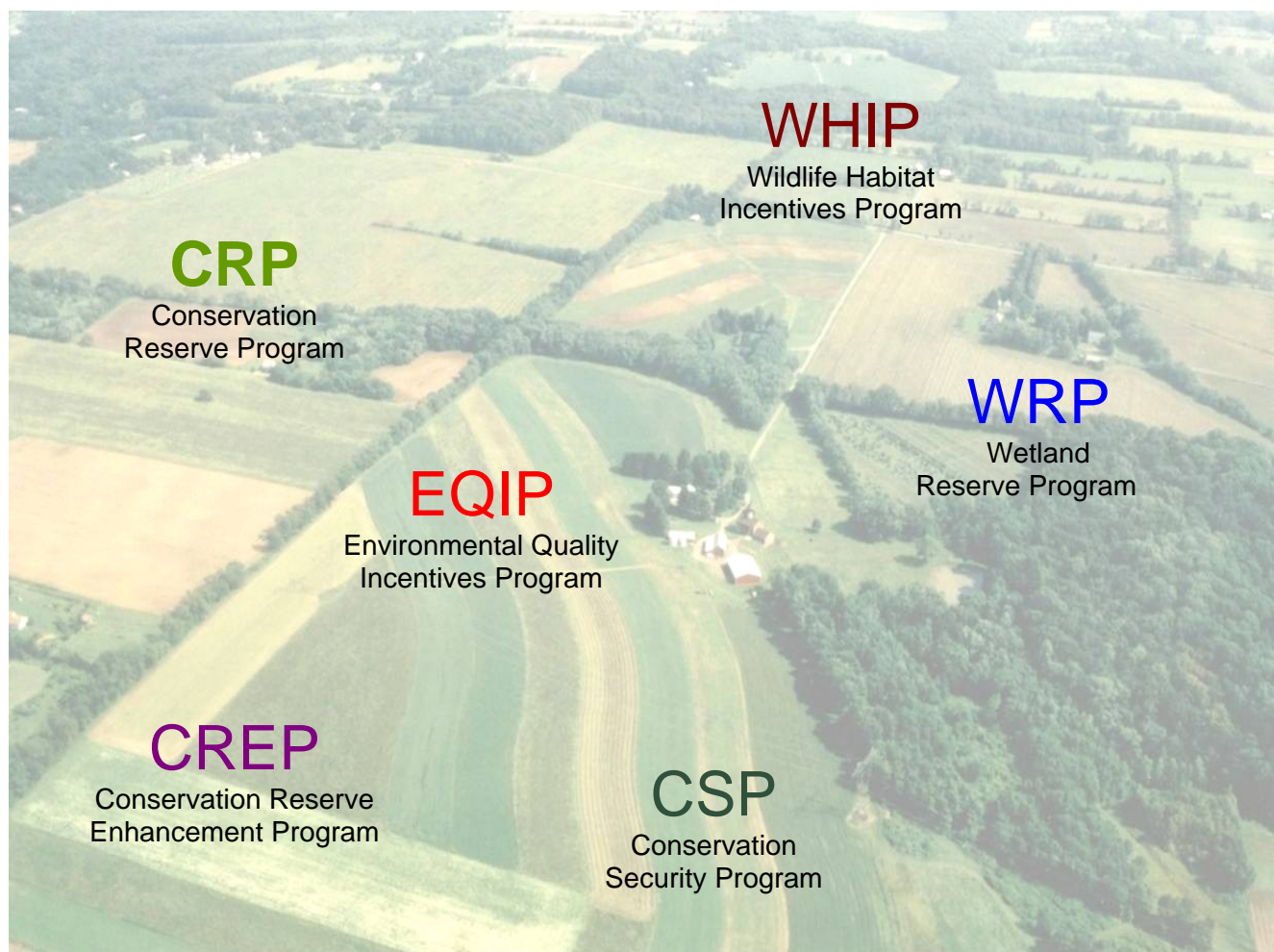


Applying for Financial Assistance

for

Land Stewardship & Conservation



This booklet is for you if you need technical and financial assistance to:

- Improve the condition of your soil
- Reduce nutrient & pesticide runoff
- Develop habitat for declining species
- Maintain land in grass cover
- Improve your irrigation water use
- Use manure from your operation as a resource, not as a waste product
- Plant trees for conservation, or
- Improve the condition of your pastures

Completion of this booklet is required as part of an official application for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. It is recommended for all other programs.

Overview

Federal Farm Bill Programs are conservation programs offered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). These programs are administered by two agencies of the USDA – the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Services Agency (FSA). The programs include technical and financial assistance to protect or enhance natural resources on private (non-federal) lands.

The Farm Bill Programs available in NJ are:

CRP – Conservation Reserve Program

CREP – Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

CSP – Conservation Security Program

EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program

WHIP – Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

WRP – Wetland Reserve Program

Federal farm bill programs are available to persons, entities, and organizations regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. However, some programs are limited by rule to specific applicant types (such as agricultural producers) and to specific types of land (such as private land).

Definitions used in this guide:

Entity – any individual, partnership, joint venture, corporation (limited liability or other), estate, trust, non-profit association or group, or unit of state or local government that controls land for which conservation program assistance is being requested.

Applicant – the eligible entity that completes the application paperwork using a social security number, employer identification number, or other IRS identification number. All contract payment limitations and program eligibility will be based on the identification number assigned. Additionally, IRS-1099s will be generated under that identification number.

Not all entities are eligible to apply for all programs.

Conservation practice – any one of the over 160 different treatments, measures, or systems identified in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg>) that address soil, water, air, plant or animal resource concerns. Each conservation practice has an approved standard that includes a definition, purpose, condition where the practice applies, criteria for implementation, and other considerations for adoption, operation, and maintenance.

Conservation Programs Offered in NJ

Federal Farm Bill Conservation Programs– A Summary

Program:	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	CRP Enhancement Program (CREP)
Description:	Provides for annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term resource conserving covers on eligible farmland.	Annual rental and incentive payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term buffer practices (riparian buffers, filter strips, grassed waterways, and contour buffer strips) on eligible farmland.
Land Eligibility:	Marginal pastureland or highly-erodible cropland that has been planted for 4 to 6 of the years prior to the 2002 Farm Bill.	CREP is open to any eligible land that is suitable for the buffer practice.
Person Eligibility	A person eligible to bid land into CRP must be an owner, operator, or tenant of eligible cropland.	A person eligible to bid land into CRP must be an owner, operator, or tenant of eligible cropland.
Type of Assistance/ Duration of Program:	Annual rental payments are made on land based on the agricultural rental value. Cost-share payments may cover up to 50% of the cost of establishing conservation practices. Payments are made for 10-15 years.	Annual rental and incentive payments are made on land based on the agricultural rental value. Payments are made for 10-15 years. CREP provides cost-share through a state and federal partnership that may cover up to 100% of costs.

Program:	Conservation Security Program (CSP)	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Description:	Rewards producers who are actively protecting soil and water quality on their cropland and pasture. Provides additional incentives for exceeding minimum standards.	Provides assistance to install permanent measures or adopt new management strategies that address existing resource concerns on farms. EQIP promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals.
Land Eligibility:	Privately owned land that meets certain eligibility requirements of soil and water quality. Specific requirements are announced each year by publication in the federal register.	Private agricultural land, including eligible cropland, pasture, private non-industrial forest land, and other farm or ranch lands that are in compliance with the Highly-Erodible land provisions of the farm bill.
Person Eligibility	Applicants must be agricultural producers who share in the risk of producing the crop or livestock; must control the land for the life of the contract; and must be in compliance with adjusted gross income requirements.	Applicants must be an individual, entity, or joint operation engaged in livestock or agricultural production, producing a minimum of \$1000 worth of agricultural products per year; must control the land for the life of the contract; and must be in compliance with adjusted gross income requirements.
Type of Assistance/ Duration of Program:	Applications are accepted only during announced sign-up periods and require an in-person interview. Based on participation tier, landowner may receive payments of up to \$45,000 annually for 5-10 years.	Financial and technical assistance cost-share payments are available at various reimbursement rates for conservation practices that address critical resource needs. Contracts last for a minimum one year after last practice is installed, up to a maximum 10 years.

Program:		<i>Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)</i>	<i>Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)</i>
Description:		Provides financial incentives to landowners to enhance and restore wetlands on lands previously drained for agricultural use. Landowners benefit by seeing a reduction in problems associated with farming in potentially difficult areas.	Provides financial assistance for the enhancement or creation of habitat for target species of concern, or for specific habitat types in decline. Also can provide funding for habitat projects on school sites.
Land Eligibility:		Most private wetlands that were converted before 1985 are eligible. Land must have been cropped, must be restorable and must meet certain eligibility requirements.	All non-federal lands in compliance with Highly-Erodible land provisions of the farm bill are eligible.
Person Eligibility		Landowners who have owned the land for at least 12 months prior to enrollment and have clear title to the property.	Applicants do not have to be agricultural producers, but must have control of the land for the life of the contract and meet adjusted gross income requirements.
Type of Assistance/ Duration of Program:		<i>Permanent easement</i> – offers 100% of permanent easement and construction costs; <i>30-year easement</i> – 75% of permanent easement and construction costs; <i>Restoration Cost-Share Agreement</i> –75% cost-share for construction costs; agreements up to 10 years.	Cost-share payments are available for up to 75% of the cost of practices that enhance specific wildlife habitat elements for targeted species. Contracts may last from 5 to 10 years.

Applying for federal farm conservation programs includes 5 steps:

- 1st. The applicant indicates interest in one or more programs and completes:
 - the program application form
 - all eligibility documentation
 - a summary of land uses and needs
- 2nd. USDA completes an initial evaluation. This may include NRCS visits to the property or applicant appointments at the service center office to discuss conservation alternatives and program requirements.
- 3rd. USDA completes an estimate of project costs and finalizes the program application. The applicant must review and sign the final program application package.
- 4th. USDA selects applications for contracting based on available funding.
- 5th. The applicant and USDA complete contract documents. The applicant may then begin implementing the contracted practices.

This booklet details step 1 only.

Step 1 is the responsibility of the applicant. USDA will assist an applicant to process a program application only after a complete application (step 1) has been submitted. Step 1 has three parts.

The applicant must complete

- the appropriate application form,
- all eligibility documentation for the land and the person or entity applying, and
- an inventory of land uses and resource needs.

Information about these three parts will be found on the following pages.

Program Application Form

Each federal farm bill program has its own application form. Forms are available at any USDA Service Center and on-line at <http://165.221.16.90/dam/ffasforms/currentforms.asp>.

The forms used by program are:

CRP and CREP - Conservation Reserve Program Worksheet (CRP2)

CSP, EQIP, and WHIP - Conservation Program Application/Contract (CCC1200)

WRP - Application for Long-Term Contracted Assistance (AD1153)

You need to complete a separate application for each program that interests you, but you need to establish your eligibility and document your land uses and needs only once.

Eligibility Documentation

In order to qualify for a USDA farm bill program, each applicant must meet both applicant eligibility and land eligibility criteria. The criteria are specific for each program. Some forms may need to be updated annually if you are not funded in the year you originally apply.

The eligibility criteria are defined in the NRCS Conservation Programs manual (<http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov>) and FSA program handbooks, and are summarized in program fact sheets available at USDA Service Centers, at <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs> or at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj/>.

Once your application is funded, you must also continue to maintain your eligibility throughout your contract period in order to receive program payments.

- **Who can fill out the application?**

Bottom line - the person that completes the application must have the legal authority to do so.

If you are an individual applying for land you own or rent, the process is straight forward.

If you are an individual applying on behalf of an entity such as a family owned corporation, non-profit entity, or unit of government, then there are more steps involved.

The first step is to determine the legal person or entity name under which the application will be made. The name that appears on the application will determine the tax identification number to be used (social security number, employer identification number or IRS number) and to whom payments are issued.

Each applicant name must match the tax id number provided. For example, Joe Smith puts his name on his application, but uses an employer identification number for Smith Farms. The system will reject his application. All applicants earning program benefits will receive IRS-1099's, so be sure to use the correct tax identification number on your applications.

- **How do you establish legal signature authority?**

In order to apply for programs, you must have signature authority to act on behalf of the identified applicant. Therefore, for **any** situation other than an individual applying under their own social security number, you will need to present original legal documents, power of attorney (form NRCS-CPA-09 or FSA-211), notarization or an affixed official seal that has authorized you to act on the applicant's behalf. You will also be required to obtain the landowner's signature to apply for practices on land you do not own.

- **What forms are required?**

1. Almost all applicants are required to complete an **AD-1026**, *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification* with the Farm Service Agency (FSA), if one is not already on file for the current crop year. An AD-1026A form which will be attached to the AD-1026 that identifies the cropland for each farm and tract number associated with the applicant. If you do own or operate any cropland, you are still required to complete an AD-1026.
2. Most applicants are required to fill out a **CCC-526**, *Payment Eligibility Average Adjusted Gross Income Certification*. This form identifies the type of applicant; choices are Individual, Corporation, Trust or Estate, Limited Partnership, Limited Liability Company, Limited Liability Partnership or Similar Entity, Tax-Exempt or Non-Profit Organization.

Based on the type of applicant selected, the CCC-526 identifies the additional paperwork required to determine average adjusted gross income (AGI). This is necessary since most farm bill programs exclude payment eligibility from applicants who have an AGI greater than \$2.5 million for the three tax years preceding the application fiscal year and less than 75 percent of their AGI is derived from farming, ranching or forestry operations.

3. For partnerships, corporations, or limited liability companies, a CCC501A form is needed to identify the members of the entity. For example, the Smith Farms limited partnership consists of two members, Joe Smith and Bob Smith.
 - a. **CCC501-A**, Members Information - used to determine the structure of entities for payment purposes.
 - b. **CCC501-B**, Designation of "Permitted Entities" - used to designate up to 3 entities to receive a payment or benefit under applicable programs.
4. Form CCC-502 may be required by Farm Service Agency (FSA) to determine the applicant eligibility for some program payments. Legal documents for the applicant must accompany these forms, providing supporting documentation for their farming operation.
 - a. **CCC502-A**, Farm Operating Plan for Payment Eligibility Review for an Individual
 - b. **CCC502-B**, Farm Operating Plan for Payment Eligibility Review for a Joint Venture or General Partnership
 - c. **CCC502-C**, Farm Operating Plan for Payment Eligibility Review for Corporations, Limited Partnerships or Other Similar Entities
 - d. **CCC502-D**, Farm Operating Plan for Payment Eligibility Review for an Estate or Trust
5. If your application is selected for funding, a Direct Deposit Sign-up Form (SF-1199a), which provides us with electronic funds transfer information to your banking institution, will be required within 15 days of program acceptance. All USDA program payments are issued through electronic funds transfer or direct deposit.

- **How do I know which forms to fill out?**

Except for CRP and CREP, all applicants should fill out as a minimum the AD-1026, CCC-526 and CCC-501A or B (if applicable) in addition to the program application form. Specific instructions can be received from any USDA Service Center office staff member.

Documentation of Land Uses and Needs:

Basic Information:

Name (legal/full) of Applicant: _____

Applicant is an ☐ Individual ☐ Non-individual Entity

Common or Business Name (if used by you or others to identify the operation or land):

Business Type (if applicable, select from list below): _____

Mailing Address: street _____

City, state, zip _____, _____, _____

Property location (if different than above): _____

Contact Information: (check the preferred contact method)

☐ Home phone (_____) _____ - _____

☐ Cell phone (_____) _____ - _____

☐ Farm phone (_____) _____ - _____

☐ Other phone (_____) _____ - _____

☐ Fax number (_____) _____ - _____

☐ Email address _____ @ _____

Best time of day to contact me is:

_____ or

Business Types:

Churches, Charities

City Owned

Corporation with Stockholders

Corporation with no Stockholders

County Owned

Estate

Federal Owned

Financial Institution

General Entity Member

General Partnership

Group of Individuals

Individual Operating a Small Business

Joint Venture

Limited Liability Company

Limited Partnership

Non-Profit Organization

Public School

State Owned

Trust Irrevocable

Trust - Revocable

Unknown, none of the above

Landowner concurrence: *This section MUST be completed for the applicant to be eligible for any permanent vegetative or structural practice.*

I authorize _____ (operator) to install and maintain vegetative and/or structural practices on my land for conservation purposes.

(print name), **owner**

Owner Signature

Date

Information about Your Land

Complete the following items, to the best of your ability. Make note of any concern or question you may have for the conservation planner. The more information you supply to us the easier it will be to assist you.

Name of Landowner(s): _____

Name of Manager or Land User: _____

Address: (if different than previous page) _____

Site Location: _____

Watershed: _____

Describe your land: _____

The land is permanently deed restricted for agricultural use under a state, local, or non-profit program. ☐ YES ☐ NO

Describe any known archaeological, historical or cultural features present on your land:

List streams or creeks running through or adjacent to your land:

What is your domestic water source (well, public) and if it's a well, where is it located?

List contracts, easements, and/or agreements that have been entered into, for technical or financial assistance, which restrict your land management practices (eg. land preservation through state, county, or municipality):

List conservation practices you have already applied on your land:

List conservation practices you have considered applying:

List funding programs in which you are interested, if known: _____

Identify ("X") the types of concerns you have for your land on the chart below.

Resource Issue	Crop fields	Hay fields	Pasture areas	Livestock areas	Woods	Barn yards	Stream corridors	Other areas
acres								
Erosion or Soil issues								
Drainage concerns or excess water								
Waste management, manure storage or use								
Grazing issues – plant quality, livestock water, erosion, etc.								
Irrigation and water management								
Fertilizer or pesticide management								
Endangered species habitat (plant or animal)								
Other issue								

Provide any detailed information about your selections above: _____

Check the box if you would like additional information on:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil Quality/Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cropland Erosion Control | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality Assessment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient or Pesticide Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland Restoration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock & Dairies | <input type="checkbox"/> Irrigation Water Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manure Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pasture/Grassland Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning | |

Cropping Supplement

Crops Grown

Crops grown in a typical year (including cover crop)	Total Acres	Typical Planting Date	Typical Harvest Date	Is residue removed? (Y/N)

Crop Rotation Description (if applicable)

Acres	Typical Cropping Sequence (include # years in rotation)
Ex. 53 acres	3 years: soybeans, winter wheat, corn residue left, corn residue left

Tillage & Other Field Operations

Tillage or other field operation	Implement	Crop	Date

Most recent soil test date: _____ Most recent manure test date: _____

Irrigation Supplement

List irrigation water source(s), (if a pond, please list depth and surface area of pond; if a well, please list diameter, depth and yield of well):

Have you irrigated this land at least two (2) of the past five (5) years? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Pump Information:

System Type (solid set, gun, pivot, drip, micro-sprinkler, other)		
Pump Type (centrifugal, submersible, vertical turbine)		
HP		
Vertical Lift or Suction Head (Ft)		
Flow rate (gpm)		

Irrigation System Details

Field Number							
Field Size (acres)							
Typical Crop							
Length of lateral(s) (feet)							
Distance between laterals or towpath (feet)							
Number of zones							
Number of laterals per zone							
Number sprinklers zone							
Sprinkler flow rate (gpm) or Emitter flow rate (gph)							
Flow rate to each zone (gpm)							
Time to irrigate each zone (hours)							
Interval between irrigations days							

Livestock Supplement

Livestock Kind	Housing	Numbers	Average Weight	# Days Held Annually

Describe your livestock management: (forages and roughages used, season of use, grazing system)

Describe your manure storage and applications of manure: _____

Describe your livestock watering system: _____

Dairy Supplement

Breed of cows: _____

Animal Description

Stage of cows	Number	Housing and bedding used (Freestall, Drylot, etc.) / (Straw, Shavings, etc.)
Milking cows		
Dry cows		
Bred Heifers		
Heifers and Calves		

Pasture Supplement

What is your greatest pasture need or interest?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved grassland/pasture condition, | <input type="checkbox"/> Irrigation needs, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pasture rotation options, | <input type="checkbox"/> General pasture management, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forage quality and/or quantity, | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noxious weeds | |

1. Type(s) of animals that use the pasture _____

2. What is the season of use for the pasture (number of average days on pasture per year)?

3. Are additional acreages used in conjunction with this property for livestock rotation or herd management? ☐ Y or ☐ N

If yes, should these acreages be incorporated into your conservation plan? ☐ Y or ☐ N

4. Do you provide supplemental feed on a regular basis? ☐ Y or ☐ N

5. Do you currently use pasture management practices? ☐ Y or ☐ N

If yes, please list (e.g. dragging, scheduled mowing, over-seeding, etc.)

Wildlife Supplement

1. Are you interested in wildlife conservation on your property? ☐ Y or ☐ N

2. What areas could be considered for wildlife conservation on your property?

3. Are there other wildlife conservation practices you are considering?

4. List the fish, wildlife or plant species of concern on or near your land (game, seasonal wildlife, threatened species, etc):

**For more information, contact your local
USDA Service Center in New Jersey:**

Mercer, Middlesex and Monmouth counties

Freehold Service Center

4000 Kozloski Rd. Box 5033, Freehold, NJ 07728

Telephone: (732) 462-0075

Hunterdon, Somerset and Union counties

Frenchtown Service Center

687 Pittstown Rd Suite 2, Frenchtown, NJ 08825

Telephone: (908) 782-4614

Morris, Sussex and Warren counties

Hackettstown Service Center

101 Bilby Rd, Bldg #1, Hackettstown, NJ 07840

Telephone: (908) 852-2576

Burlington, Camden and Ocean counties

Hainesport Service Center

1289 Route 38, Hainesport, NJ 08036

Telephone: (609) 267-0811

Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Passaic counties

Somerset Office

220 Davidson Avenue, 4th Floor, Somerset NJ 08873

Telephone: (732) 537-6057

Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties

Vineland Service Center

1317 South Main Rd. Bldg 3, Vineland, NJ 08360

Telephone: (856) 205-1225

Gloucester and Salem counties

Woodstown Service Center

51 Cheney Road, Suite 2, Woodstown, NJ 08098

Telephone: (856) 769-1126